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ABSTRACT

A November 1992 conference on multilingualism and the role of language in European-American communications and trade is summarized in a series of brief essays. After a foreword from the president of the Commission of the European Communities, these articles are presented: an introduction (Jacqueline Grapin); "Towards Transatlantic Linguistic Cooperation: Conclusions from the Seminar" (Humphrey Tonkin); "The Realities of Multilingual Communication: Edited Extracts from Statements," including "Why New Amsterdam Speaks English" (Andreas van Agt)," A New Multilingual World in Atlanta" (William E. Brock), "Brussels: Where Language Is Politics" (Renee van Hoof-Haferkamp), "The UN: Generating a New International Terminology" (Francoise Cestac), "National Identity Versus European Integration" (Stanley Hoffmann), "Supporting Multilingual Education" (James Oberstar), "A Calendar for a European Common Language" (Francois Villaincourt), "The Bilingual Experience of the Franco-German Brigade" (Joachim Franke), and "Resisting the Anglo-Centric Approach" (Stephanie van Reigersberg); and "The Politics and Pragmatics of Language Diversity" (Humphrey Tonkin). A partial list of seminar participants is appended. (MSE)

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MULTILINGUALISM IN EUROPE AND THE US: A COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGE FOR TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS AND GLOBAL BUSINESS

Conclusions from an International Round Table Seminar

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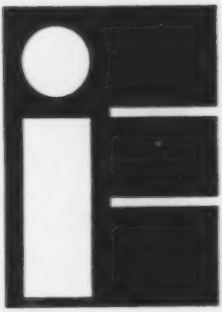

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Conducted by The European Institute

Washington, DC
November, 1992

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Conclusions from an International Round Table Seminar

Conducted by The European Institute
Washington, DC
November, 1992

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PART I

FOREWORD

By The Honorable Jacques Delors
President of the Commission of the European Communities

Message from Jacques Delors, President of the Commission of the European Communities to The European Institute seminar, "Multilingualism in Europe and the United States: A Communications Challenge for Transatlantic Relations and Global Business."

Each day brings further proof that it is indispensable for communication to be improved at all levels in order to know each other better and thus understand each other more fully. It is in this spirit that I view the initiative undertaken by The European Institute of Washington and the Commission of the European Communities in organizing the first symposium on the challenges represented by multilingualism in Europe and the United States of America. I am confident that the experience of the politicians, diplomats, senior officials, academics and specialists gathered at this symposium constitutes a guaranty of interesting work which may be taken into account by our Institutions.

PART II

INTRODUCTION

By Jacqueline Grapin
President
The European Institute

Language is the most basic component of communication. It is also part of everyone's identity. Individuals, and nations express themselves through language to collectively communicate with each other.

Transnational communication has always been possible, but the instantaneous nature and pervasive utilization of contemporary global communication systems has increased the importance and difficulties of effective communication.

The integration of the European Community is one of the most recent, and most sophisticated examples of cultural interaction - and its significance extends well beyond the Community itself. International communication through a diversity of languages and cultures raises a number of issues which are relevant to transatlantic relations as well, and to the globalization of a number of human activities. Although English has become a major vehicle of communication internationally, within the United States a number of ethnic groups still want to protect their native languages.

The respective roles of various languages is a political question. The implications of differentiating between national (or local) and internationally-used languages are numerous. A number of the implications are economic.

Typically, European integration has been considered in economic and commercial terms. It is now being considered in monetary, political and security terms. However, language and culture will be a fundamental facet of its future. The European Community has twelve member states and nine official languages. It is conceivable that by the end of the century an enlarged Community will have up to twelve official languages.

The United Nations, on the other hand, has 179 members and only nine official languages, and the Council of Europe, which involves over twenty countries from Western and Central Europe, has only two official languages.

Such multilingualism poses practical, logistical and financial constraints and challenges for the Community itself, as well as for its international partners. In a world where migrations become the rule rather than the exception, multicultural societies will become the norm. Factors such as tolerance for different cultures, conditions of efficiency, and ways and means of integration, will be taken more and more into account in the decision making process.

These issues have never systematically been examined within the European Community or transatlantically. The European Institute decided to initiate this

process through an interdisciplinary, transatlantic approach. One very practical goal was to examine the increasing need for interpreters and the shortage of multilingual experts not only in European institutions, but also for a large number of organizations and corporations on both sides of the Atlantic.

On November 18 and 19, 1992 in Washington, DC, The European Institute provided a neutral, high level, interdisciplinary forum to discuss the range of economic, social and political issues related to multilingualism in Europe and the United States, and explore possible avenues for transatlantic initiatives and collaboration. In cooperation with the Joint Service Interpretation-Conferences of the Commission of the European Communities, it convened a special seminar entitled, "MULTILINGUALISM IN EUROPE AND THE US: A COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGE FOR TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS AND GLOBAL BUSINESS."

The European Institute would like to express its gratitude to *Mrs. Renée van Hoof-Haferkamp*, Director-General of the Joint Service Interpretation-Conferences of the Commission of the European Communities, and to her staff, for their cooperation in the organization of the seminar. Without the generous support of the Commission of the European Communities, as well as the Government of Germany, the Embassy of France, Time Warner Inc, and Air France, this forum would not have been possible.

Dr. Humphrey Tonkin, President of the University of Hartford, who served as the Rapporteur for the seminar, shared his expertise. *Mrs. Françoise Cestac*, Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Office of Conference Services, assisted us in conceptualizing the program, as did *Baron Willem Bentinck*, Minister of the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Washington, who served as the Moderator of the seminar discussions.

I would also like to thank the participants in the meeting for their contributions. Speakers and discussion leaders included such experts as:

Colonel Donald C. Fischer, Jr., Commandant, Defense Language Institute/Foreign Language Center, Monterey, California;

Major Joachim Franke, Franco-German Brigade; Müllheim, Germany;

Professor Stanley Hoffmann, Chairman, Center for European Studies, Harvard University, Boston, Massachusetts;

Jeffrey Munks, Director of Marketing and Sales, AT&T Language Line Services, Monterey, California;

Stephanie van Reigersberg, Chief, Interpreting Division, Office of Language Services, US Department of State, Washington, DC;

Professor Dr. Klaus Schubert, Studiengang Technikübersetzen, Fachhochschule Flensburg, Germany; and

Professor François Vaillancourt, Department of Economic Sciences, University of Montreal, Canada.

We hope that the conclusions of the discussions will lead to progress in the understanding of this complex issue, and possibly to some recommendations - controversial or not - which might be made to politicians in Europe and elsewhere.

J.G.

PART III

TOWARDS TRANSATLANTIC LINGUISTIC COOPERATION

Conclusions From the Seminar

"Each day brings further proof," writes Jacques Delors, President of the Commission of the European Communities in his greetings to The European Institute's seminar, "that it is indispensable for communication to be improved at all levels in order to know each other better and thus understand each other more fully." Presenters at the transatlantic meeting echoed the sentiments of Mr. Delors, and several pointed out that, amidst all the economic, political, and social problems of Europe and the US, it was relatively unusual to deal with something as basic as language and language difference. **All too often we concern ourselves with "visible and tangible issues," and we forget that behind these issues lies the simple matter of communication.** Language and communication are the infrastructures on which society is built. While effective communication will not necessarily solve our problems, lack of it will cause the problems to multiply.

While effective communication will not necessarily solve our problems, lack of it will cause the problems to multiply.

The meeting also came at an important moment in the development of Europe and the European idea. The continent of Europe is rapidly changing, and this process of change is full of contradictions. It is significant that January 1, 1993, the date chosen for the next step in European union, is also the date for the peaceful separation of the Czech Republic and the Republic of Slovakia, which had been together for most of the century. Discussion of European integration was carried on at the meeting against the backdrop of ethnic unrest and division throughout Eastern and Central Europe, upheavals over these issues in Germany, and even within Western Europe, the problems with the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. Participants were intensely aware of the fact that, even as they engaged in their deliberations, the old order, the order of the Cold War, was passing, and that a new order, or rather disorder - uncertain and unclear and in many respects deeply threatening - was emerging.

In fact, it is important to make clear at the outset something that was on occasion less than clear in the seminar deliberations themselves: the term Europe has many meanings. A decade ago, two forces pulled Europe towards east and west, creating a gulf at its center: the European Community in the West, with non-member capitalist countries, like Sweden, Austria, Norway, Finland, and Switzerland, drawn into its orbit; and the Soviet

Union in the East, with the socialist countries of Eastern Europe a largely undisputed part of its sphere of influence. Western Europe owned its sense of cohesion in part to the fact that it was not Eastern Europe, that it was not totalitarian and communist. Suddenly this centrifugal force has gone: Central Europe has re-emerged as an entity, and with it much greater ambiguity in the relationship between East and West, much less clarity of spheres of influence, and fewer imperatives for the preservation of unity in the West. There are now many Europes, and many different conceptions of what a united Europe of the future might look like.

Language as an Issue

In his welcoming comments, Ambassador Andreas van Agt, Head of the Delegation of the Commission of the European Communities in Washington, drew attention to the changes and emergent contradictions in the Europe of the West. He pointed to the tension between a policy of nine official languages in the European Community (EC) and the *de facto* supremacy of English and French, now increasingly joined by German.

Behind the nine "official" languages are, of course various regional movements calling for the recognition of regional languages, an effort which met with some success, for example in the Council of Europe, but was also resisted, particularly by the British and French. Thus, the position of the nine languages of the EC members is threatened from beneath by regionalism and from above by informal understandings concerning the use of the region's dominant languages. Ambassador van Agt pointed out that **the political direction of Europe can be affected in quite dramatic ways by common languages or diversity of languages when one head of state can talk directly and informally with another, but a third is excluded**. This is bound to have its effect on the political scene.

Compounding the political instability of the relationship among indigenous languages in Western Europe is the question of immigration. **To what extent should governments seek to preserve the cultures of immigrants, and to what extent should they seek to integrate them? Ambassador van Agt noted that Europe can learn much from the American experience**, where speakers of ninety-two different languages now frequent the public schools of New York City and where most urban school systems battle with enormous linguistic problems in their efforts to integrate, and yet preserve the rights of new immigrants. Here, as in so many areas related to language, there is a lack of consensus, both on the definition of the problem and on how to solve it.

Multilingualism, as many participants pointed out in the course of the day, is both a blessing and a curse. The problem before us is how to preserve and protect diversity without allowing differences to stand in the way of effective communication, cooperation, and equal qpportunity.

Multilingualism, as many participants pointed out in the course of the day, is both a blessing and a curse.

The fact that the nine languages of the EC are challenged from both above and below came as no surprise to Senator William Brock, who observed that governments enjoy less popular support today than ever, and that two apparently contradictory processes continue apace throughout the world: the globalization of the economy and the fragmentation of political systems. As Mrs. Renée van Hoof-Haferkamp, Director-General of the Joint Service for Interpretation-Conferences at the EC Commission, pointed out, many regionalists favor European integration precisely because it weakened the authority of central governments.

Mrs. van Hoof-Haferkamp was not optimistic about the future of Europe, at least as far as language is concerned. In its zeal to include all of the official governmental languages of the various states as co-equals, the European Community has created a "monster," in effect setting the scene for national competition and the promotion of national self-interest in the debate over language use. The only hope, Mrs. van Hoof-Haferkamp felt, lies in depoliticizing language in the official bodies of the Community.

Increasingly, in the EC, languages and language use are being employed as political devices.

The perspective from the United Nations, as expressed by Mrs. Françoise Cestac, Assistant Secretary-General for Conference Services, was slightly different. Her report included the observation that the demand for translation and interpretation in the various official languages of the General Assembly was changing as a result of the appearance of new states in Europe and Asia, but for her the challenge is to cultivate clarity of expression (for example, through standardization of terminology), while leaving room for constructive ambiguity of the sort required for the creative application of the arts of diplomacy.

The Idea of Europe

It is not possible to understand the language situation in Europe, or in the US for that matter, without understanding the nature of European unity and national unity. Professor Stanley Hoffmann, Chairman, Center for European Studies, Harvard University, in his remarks addressed these issues, dwelling not on language per se, but on those phenomena of which language can be a manifestation.

Professor Hoffmann reminded the participants that the idea of a united Europe was born above all in France in the years following World War II. The French thought that the idea of Europe might serve the Germans as an alternative to the idea of Germany. As for France itself, it was thought that it might be possible to create among the French the notion of dual identities, the one French and national, the other European and federal.

In fact, as Europe has changed economically and politically, many different views of what constitutes Europe have emerged. Some see European union as purely instrumental, and thus welcome the integration of the business and service economies that has already taken place, but are less content to move toward political integration. Certain others are willing to go further, toward social and cultural integration. For many, this further stage of integration is unacceptable, leaving such people wondering where the process will end and what they must give up. The Maastricht debate, taking place in the years immediately following German reunification - i.e., after one of the events that the idea of Europe was for some born to avoid, and taking place also in a Western Europe from which the Soviet threat had been removed - brought these issues into sharp focus. Was the maintenance of a dual identity still possible, and what did the future hold? What was the purpose of a united Europe?

The Political Economy of Languages: Europe

Dr. Hélène Ahrweiler, President, University of Europe, observed that one of the beauties of the European Community was that it recognized all the official languages of its members.

If the EC expands further, this principle of language co-equality may become technically and financially unrealizable.

However, if the Community expands further, this principle may become technically and financially unrealizable.

Dr. Jonathan Pool, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Washington, reminded the participants that, if the European Community were caught in an expanding multilingualism, and if the addition of further countries were to so overload the language services as to bring them to a standstill, there were other options. He laid out six, varying from the use of a single language belonging to none of the member countries, through the use of one intermediate language for interpretation and translation, to the use of all languages. Professor Pool urged the desirability of a cost-benefit analysis of the various alternatives and the adoption of a language policy based on such an analysis.

He was echoed by Dr. François Vaillancourt, Department of Economic Sciences, University of Montreal, who drew on his experience as an economist of language in French-speaking Canada. **To an economist**, observed Professor Vaillancourt, **language is human capital, a device for storing value and wealth, and a means of exchange**. Europe faces six major language issues:

1. The administrative use of languages by EC institutions;

2. The private use of languages, including minority languages;

3. The treatment of non-European immigrant languages;

4. Language learning by EC citizens;

5. The language needs of the EC in its relations with the rest of the world and

6. The role of languages in promoting European unity.

From an economic standpoint, Europe should favor those languages that have the most market relevance both within and beyond the EC. It should work toward a common European language over the longer run, but in the shorter run, **it should consider a system whereby people or "users" have to pay for multilingualism, so that there exists a clear understanding of the costs associated with the use of several languages**.

The Political Economy of Languages: The United States

Two speakers provided an American perspective on multilingualism. Nguyen Ngoc-Bich, Deputy Director, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, US Department of Education, explored some of the problems of multilingualism in the US and the available policy solutions. Despite the wishes of many, the English language has never been declared the official government language of the US, but it is generally understood that an overriding policy concern is improving the proficiency in English of all inhabitants of the country, while preserving the language rights of everyone involved. Unfortunately, sensitivity to language issues is not widespread, and education in foreign languages in the US lags far behind the need.

This point was reinforced with great eloquence by the luncheon speaker, Representative James L. Oberstar, of Minnesota. Congressman Oberstar reviewed the record of the US in the teaching of foreign languages, pointing out that the concept of the melting pot, and the emphasis on integration into American society, had over the years the effect of driving out much language knowledge and relegating foreign languages to a position of low prestige. The challenges facing Americans and Europeans alike are to recognize languages for what they are - a means of entering another culture and understanding the soul of a people - and to recognize the importance of preserving these differences while using language learning and translation as a bridge.

Practical Solutions

With Major Joachim Franke, Franco-German Brigade, the conference turned to a practical report on a bilingual situation of a new kind - the Franco-German Brigade - which uses both French and German for its internal communication. Major Franke pointed out that NATO uses English exclusively, and that French is not the most popular foreign language in Germany, nor German in France. Hence, there is a formidable linguistic obstacle to be overcome. The Brigade's structure is pyramidal, with greater competency in the other language required toward the apex, and with particular emphasis on passive knowledge of the other language for all but the most senior personnel. Senior personnel conduct peacetime meetings in which they use only the language of the other nation, in order to improve their proficiency. Written communications are conveyed in the native language of the writer.

The model described by Major Franke, and pronounced a success, might well offer a blueprint for other forms of binational or bilingual

institutions. However, it would be difficult to sustain in an environment involving three or more languages.

In such multilingual situations, are there alternatives to what can now be called traditional techniques of translation and interpretation? When this question is asked, most people mention technology and the machine processing of language as a possible option, or they bring up the possibility of greater emphasis on language learning. The seminar was fortunate in being able to hear from experts in both of these areas.

Professor Dr. Klaus Schubert, Studiengang Technikübersetzen, Fachhochschule Flensburg, discussed the advantages and limitations of computers. Computers, he said, are good at writing and printing, good at reading, storing, and transmitting information, fairly good at retrieving information and speaking, somewhat capable of hearing, not terribly good at correcting and proofreading, and poor at understanding. Since translation, while it involves several of these operations, is above all based on the understanding of texts, it is difficult for a computer to perform.

Currently, researchers are focusing their attention on the study of meaning, on the study of vagueness (or "fuzzy logic" - a very important element in language), and on the creation of norms and standards in the field. Prof. Dr. Schubert suggested that what was needed was a model of language as a representation of meaning, a model of language as a representation of vagueness, and an international, manufacturer-independent standard for an intermediate language for machine translation and the management of multilingual documents.

He pointed out that in Europe there are perhaps sixty-seven languages, that **the largest European language has a non-Latin script, and that most of them do not have a twenty-six-letter alphabet of the English-speaking inventors of computers. In short, the very mechanics of encoding languages present varying degrees of problems to multilingual computing**.

When movable type was invented, some languages were well adapted to it, and others less so. Those less suited tended to decline in importance, and those well suited to grow stronger. To avoid a "Gutenberg effect" with respect to computers, it is important, Prof.Dr. Schubert suggested, to promote language technology for all languages, and to make multilingualism a design requirement for all relevant technologies. If this is done, technology can in turn support and sustain multilingualism.

Several participants had questions about the impact of technological solutions on the workplace. Do they cause union problems? How easily do translators adapt to computer-assisted translation? Do they feel threatened? The general view appeared to be that, while in the early days there was indeed some resistance, most professional translators now see machines as important aids to their profession, allowing them to work at home, to access terminology banks, and to speed up the process of editing. Translators, said Prof. Dr. Schubert, cannot be replaced by machines, but machines can increase their productivity, thereby allowing them to provide better and more comprehensive services.

Most professional translators now see machines as important aids to their profession. Translators cannot be replaced by machines, but machines can increase their productivity.

Colonel Donald Fischer, Commandant, Defense Language Institute/Foreign Language Center, Monterey, California, next turned the attention of the meeting to language learning, in the highly practical, hands-on mode of instruction of his institution. He pointed out that **language teaching must be adapted to the learning style of the student, that technology can assist in language learning, and that an important part of language learning is language maintenance -keeping the knowledge acquired fresh and functioning**. The Defense Language Institute is one of only a very small number of institutions in the US that takes these basic principles entirely seriously.

As a final contributor to this session devoted to practical models of overcoming language differences, Jeffrey Munks, who, as a young police officer in San José, California, created what has now become the AT&T Language Line, described his invention and its function. The Language Line Service allows instant telephone access on a worldwide basis to interpreters in dozens of languages. The service is relatively inexpensive and easy to use, employing interpreters who work at home and offering access to subscribers at moderate rates. It is now widely employed by hospitals, by social service agencies, by police departments, and by commercial businesses.

Perspectives on the Discussions

It was left to three discussion leaders to provide some conclusions and concluding observations for the conference: Dr.

Sara Meléndez, President, Center for Applied Linguistics; Stephanie van Reigersberg, Chief, Interpreting Division, Office of Language Services, US Department of State; and the present author. Dr.Meléndez offered a list of tasks facing US policy makers and opportunities for transatlantic cooperation. She called particularly for US-European cooperation in the introduction of foreign languages into US [illegible]ary schools on a far more comprehensive basis than at [illegible]t. She proposed the establishment of dual-language schools and programs, in which children learn one another's languages. **She called for transatlantic cooperation in the development of teaching and learning materials and in the conduct of educational research on languages**. At present, she said, bilingualism is not respected in the US; indeed it is perceived as a sign of incomplete assimilation rather than a difference to be cherished and maintained. Does pluralism, she asked, encourage such overreaction as ethnic cleansing, or does pluralism prevent it? Those questions, or variants of them, lie behind many of the public policy dilemmas faced by the US in the field of language.

Bilingualism is not respected in the US; indeed it is perceived as a sign of incomplete assimilation.

My own observations focused largely on language use in international organizations and the dilemmas and problems associated with language policy in international organizations and beyond. **Many of the decisions made, and policies implemented, in international organizations with respect to language are undertaken for reasons of politics and national prestige rather than for reasons of understanding and communication**. As a result, simple solutions are passed over in favor of complex and expensive solutions that none the less save face for the parties concerned. While we cannot expect that everyone will suddenly decide to depoliticize language, it would be helpful to have a better sense of the nature of language and how it functions politically. More attention should be given, especially in the US, to language teaching and learning. Such **language education should be directed to practical ends and should make full use of available technology to link the learner with real-life situations and to tailor instruction to learning styles**. Finally, a real effort must be made to maintain language knowledge among Americans wherever possible.

It would be helpful to have a better sense of the nature of language and how it functions politically.

The final word went to Stephanie van Reigersberg, Chief, Interpreting Division, Office of Language Services, US Department of State. Her witty remarks carried with them a certain undercurrent of sadness, as she described her efforts to convince her colleagues of the importance of foreign languages, to recruit good interpreters and compensate them adequately, and to adapt to rapidly changing international circumstances on a limited budget. The lesson was clear: **the US, despite its sophistication in so many areas, remains dangerously unresponsive to language differences and unappreciative of their importance in the international context.**

Instead of Conclusions

Stimulating contributions and lively discussion elicited the following lessons and conclusions:

1. Although the US and Europe share certain language problems as members of the international community, their situation is, in many respects, very different. The US is a country dominated by a single prestige language, in which the central public policy question has to do with the extent to which it will, or should, (a) recognize and (b) preserve and sustain other languages and accord them legal and educational recognition. Multiculturalism in the US has still to be fully accepted as a concept, and there is still no public consensus on the extent to which it should be encouraged or limits placed upon it.

2. The very concept of Europe means different things to different people. German reunification has changed the concept profoundly, and the collapse of the Soviet Union has made moot the question of how Eastern and Central Europe will relate to the European Community. **Europe has no common language, and one of the challenges before it is deciding how to communicate linguistically in order to preserve cultural pluralism while promoting ease of communication and cooperation. The search for a solution that is both politically acceptable and practical has proven difficult.** Also difficult is the question of the limits of pluralism. To what extent are regional and local languages entitled to recognition, and where does this process stop? How should educational systems be structured to suit the long-term language needs of states and regions?

3. Lurking behind all of the above is the lingering feeling that **we are not subjecting the practical solutions** underneath our noses **to sober-minded consideration and effective cost-benefit analysis**, indeed that we are so concerned with getting from one pragmatic day to the next that we do not consider longer-term priorities. We may also be victims of a certain kind of linguistic snobbery that does not allow us to see the value of language difference, or to

understand the richness of the cultures around us. We can perhaps construct for ourselves a half-serious hierarchy in which the American considers all languages other than English simply foreign, in which the Eurocrat considers half a dozen languages real and the rest mere dialects, in which the inhabitant of Madrid considers Castilian a language and Catalan a dialect, while the inhabitant of Barcelona regards Catalan a language and Valencian a dialect, and all of the above consider Esperanto to be no language at all - even though people who use it seem to communicate very effectively in this language-that-is-not-a-language. I do not suggest that viewing this hierarchy from the bottom up is any more virtuous than viewing it from top down; just that we tend to impose our own value systems on matters of language, perhaps with even less reflection than we apply to so many other things in this life.

We tend to impose our own value systems on matters of language.

4. **Embedded in the deliberations were several immediately practical steps that could be adopted by European and American agencies working together**, including research on language education, technical help, especially to American schools, language maintenance, cooperation on language technology, and cooperation in the preparation of interpreters and translators. Perhaps also high on the list should be an undertaking to repeat and expand upon the initiative of The European Institute by organizing further opportunities for the exchange of views on this important issue of public policy and cultural cooperation.

By Dr. Humphrey Tonkin
President, University of Hartford
Chair, Center for Research and Documentation on
World Language Problems

PART IV

MULTILINGUAL COMMUNICATION

Edited Extracts from Statements

Why New Amsterdam Speaks English

His Excellency Andreas van Agt
Head of the Delegation of the Commission of the European Communities, Washington, DC

I feel tempted to open my welcoming remarks by referring to the disaster that occurred when the Treaty of Breda was signed; not the Treaty of Maastricht, but the Treaty of Breda, another Dutch town all too unknown in 1667, when the British and the Dutch agreed to make a swap, with the result that New York came into being. New Amsterdam became New York, and in return the Dutch got Surinam. Had the deal not been concluded at the time, I could have addressed you in Dutch. Now Dutch is one of the all too many official languages of the European Community. The situation is complex, with more or less two working languages: English and French predominantly. Recently, the German government has raised its hand and asked for German to be put on a par with English and French.

A Charter of the Council of Europe on language minority and regional languages has been designed to help revive regional languages by promoting their use in schools and in public life. It has been signed by Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Lichtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway and Spain; but not by the United Kingdom, France, and Turkey. It is an example of how much discussion is going on in Europe on this matter.

A few weeks ago **I met Governor Mario Cuomo of New York, who told me that in New York, ninety-two different languages are spoken among the children in elementary school**.

This meeting is about these problems and the related conflicting purposes of serving efficiency, fairness, and pluralism.

A New Multilingual World in Atlanta

Senator William Brock
The Brock Group

I was recently in Atlanta, which is normally considered a more stable and coherent place than New York City. I went to a grammar school and in this school of seven and eight year old children, forty-four languages were spoken. I did not expect to find that in Atlanta, Georgia. The point is that it is a different world.

It is my conviction that in the next ten to fifteen years we will collectively face the most dangerous time in the entire post-war period. This is driven in part by the globalization of economies brought on by technology. It is also driven by the fact that we simply have revolutionized human communication in terms of technology. We have reached the point where the world is economically interdependent in a fashion that was inconceivable even thirty years ago. It will create an increasing sense of vulnerability on the part of people. People are viewing political leadership in enormously negative terms. The breaking down of national approaches to even regional, or local, or tribal, or ethnic identifications has compounded governments' problem.

These developments are crucial to this meeting because **governments are going to have to find ways to communicate that are more effective than what we have had in the last fifty years of the post-war period**. Only when you get to a more human level of communication can you really communicate. If we are going to avert the crises that I see looming on the horizon, I think it is imperative that we seek different and better ways of communication over the next ten years.

Brussels: Where Language is Politics

By Renée van Hoof-Haferkamp
Director-General, Joint Service Interpretation-Conferences,
Commission of the European Communities

There was a Dutch Ambassador to the European Community in an Ambassadorial meeting. He looked into the room and said, "I am not going to work until I have Dutch. I want to listen to Dutch." So we sent him two Dutch interpreters. He looked at them and he began to speak French.

How shall we cope with enlargement? We are going to start to negotiate with the Austrians, Swedes, Norwegians, Finns and the Swiss. The Commission was asked to make a report on enlargement to the European Council in Lisbon. It says "to ensure effective communication in meetings, pragmatic solutions have to be found by each of the institutions." We do not know what is going to happen in 1995 or 1996. We will have twelve official languages, but the *moment de vérité* is coming; by the year 2000 we may have also Czech, Slovak, Polish, and Hungarian.

The United Nations has 179 members and six languages. We have twelve member states and nine official languages. How did this happen? Only because we wanted to be very democratic when we founded the Coal and Steel Community after World War II; so that never again could a war erupt between France and Germany. It was decided not only to take French and German, but also Italian and Dutch. We started with four languages. In 1973, we added English and Danish; in 1981, Greek; and in 1986, Portuguese and Spanish.

There is a big difference between interpretation and translation. Obviously we have to translate all our legal texts into all the Community languages. Because they have a direct binding effect, they have to be applicable in all the member states. But the problems arise in meetings. **If we now had nine languages in this room, we would need twenty-seven interpreters. Nine languages mean seventy-two language combinations**, for example, you have to translate from Danish intoPortuguese and from Dutch into Greek. We have ten thousand meetings every year; fifteen percent of which are outside Brussels. We have seven hundred fifty interpreters working every day.

The difficulties come from the fact that **language is considered as part of national identity and prestige**. We could all keep our identity and still make an effort. In a small country like Luxembourg, all the Luxemburgers speak Luxembourgeois at home but when they leave their country they speak French or German or English. Yet they have never lost their identity.

The Commission currently "speaks" French, German, Italian and Spanish. But people only listen to what they need; French, German, English. It is what we call *un système assymétrique*. The idea is that it is easier to understand a language than to speak it. Thus, people can speak their own language but are supposed to understand the more generally understood languages.

We had to adopt this pragmatic solution, but not because of the cost. Surprisingly, every member country is ready to pay the price for languages. We have never had a budgetary problem in my department. The problem is that we do not find the human resources we need. **We cannot use linguists, because we cannot work with people who do not understand the subjects that they talk about. We need people who have studied economics, law, or history**. We have a serious shortage of conference interpreters. We train them ourselves and it takes six months. They have to have a university degree and know at least four out of the nine European Community languages.

The UN: Generating a New International Terminology

By Françoise Cestac
Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Office of Conference Services

A pole of communication which is developing at the present time is terminology. **For the Earth Summit in Rio, we produced in six languages 9,000 terms for environment and development. It gave birth to many new concepts**. Our office in Geneva started doing the ground work with the English and French versions - and we had to complete the work with the four remaining languages. I would like to give you an example of how one phrase was translated out of these 9,000 terms: "Not in my backyard syndrome" was translated into French as "syndrome de rejet" and "syndrome de in me casa, no" in Spanish.

At the United Nations, communications takes the form of interpretation, translation, editing and whatnot, as well as public information. We have 135 Information Centers and 1,300 non-governmental organizations. At some point, the concept of multilingualism goes beyond the boundaries of the United Nations when we want to convey important messages. We then translate documents into obscure languages.

National Identity Versus European Integration

Professor Stanley Hoffmann
Chairman, Center for European Studies, Harvard University

The issue of the role of languages in Europe is linked to the question of national identity. What do we mean by national identity? We mean the consciousness of being different from another national group and a desire to live together. But we mean something else as well - a desire or a determination to form a state. That is what distinguishes national identity from other kinds of patriotism.

We all feel many kinds of patriotism - local, regional, and so on - but what distinguishes the national type is the desire to have a state, which is still regarded as the highest form of secular allegiance. To a large degree, the state is in fact the cause or the author of national identities. The state fosters this identity through its foreign policies and deliberate measures, such as setting up a bureaucratic apparatus through rituals, feasts and celebrations.

The debate on the Maastricht Treaty raised for the first time the question of how in the long-run can national identity and a European identity be made compatible, and also, what is the destination of this whole European integration exercise. By moving beyond a common economy into issues of money, immigration, police, social policy, defense, and foreign affairs, you are really getting to the heart. The reality in Europe today is that what has been integrated over the last 40 years are the business and the service economies of the various countries. In other words, it was those sectors in each society which were, after the borders began to open in the 1950's, the most cosmopolitan.

What has remained national are two domains in particular: the political systems, because of the weakness of the European Community's institutions;, and culture. **"In Europe," a French personality once said, "culture is what is left when everything else has been integrated."** It includes, of course, education and language. And as long as the cultural system remains largely national, national identity is going to persist and there will be sharp limits to what the European Community, as such, can achieve.

If one really wants to build a European identity - rather than simply a European complement to, or component of, the national identities of old and well-established nation states - one will have to create some sort of European federal state. There is very fierce resistance to this, particularly in the two countries whose national identity is the oldest, most firmly established, and most democratically based, namely, the United Kingdom and France.

If one does not want to construct a European state, then national identity will remain as it has been.

Supporting Multilingual Education

The Honorable James Oberstar
US House of Representatives

It has taken the United States twenty-five years to confront the problem that we need to directly address the study of foreign languages.

In 1783 John Adams observed that an American diplomat should be educated in classical learning and general history (both ancient and modern), as well as be versed in the principles of ethics, legislation and government, the laws of nature and nations, and within law, civil Roman law, the laws of England and the United States, and the public law of Europe.

Almost 200 years later, we updated John Adams in legislation that I authored along with Senator Paul Simon, then a colleague of mine in the House, and Leon Panetta, Chairman of the Budget Committee. **We drafted a rather ambitious program: foreign language training at all levels of education in the United States**; and the requirement that ambassadorial candidates be competent for the post to which they are being nominated, including, to the maximum extent practicable, a useful knowledge of the principal language or dialect of the country in which the individual is to serve. But we are still only spending, in this year's Appropriation Bill, some 41.5 million dollars on foreign language and education training.

The legislation has indeed stimulated renewed interest and support at the elementary, secondary and university levels with the result that **this year we will have some 6.7 million students at all levels of the United States studying a foreign language**.

A Calendar for a European Common Language

Professor François Vaillancourt
Department of Economic Sciences, University of Montreal

Economists began addressing the issue of language roughly in 1965, mainly in the context of Canada and Quebec, and also in the American context of its Hispanic minority. A European perspective came later.

With regard to language, economists look at two main issues. First, the returns of language skills in labor markets, and second, the impact of language policies. What do economists recommend? Assuming that the European Community wants to stay together and wants to integrate somewhat more - but not assuming a United States of Europe - **an economic perspective sees that there is a need in the long-run for a common language**.

One method to determine what language to use is linked to market relevance, which includes market relevance both within and outside of the European Community. With regard to minority languages or on lesser-used languages, the economist would say that we can maintain them but that the minorities will pay for it.

I would suggest in the long-run that the EC should have a common working language. A calendar of implementation could be: select the language before the year 2010; prepare the teachers by 2020 and start teaching it; and make it a condition for employment by 2030. But start now. The economics of physical reforms tell us that in general, the longer the lead time for a reform, the easier it is for institutions and individuals to adapt to it, and the smaller the costs to society.

The Bilingual Experience of the Franco-German Brigade

Major Joachim Franke
Franco-German Brigade

NATO staff use only one language, English. They are not encountering linguistic problems because everybody who works in a NATO staff speaks and writes the English language. In the Franco-German Brigade there are two languages with the same status, French and German. They are equally used and neither of them is the other nation's number one foreign language. The most common foreign language in both countries is English.

The Franco-German Brigade consists of 4,200 men. They are not all in mixed units. We have a commanding side and a logistic side and the French and Germans work together. There is always a French and a German battalion in one garrison.

Within the mixed brigades, language knowledge is the ultimate basis of cooperation. To ensure the smooth flow of information within the purely national units, it is sufficient for the command personnel and headquarters staff personnel to speak the other nation's language. It is not necessary to have the same level of linguistic proficiency throughout the Brigade.

The main emphasis of all linguistic proficiency is the passive knowledge of our counterpart nation's language. Primarily, good listening and reading comprehension is needed. Skills in writing the foreign language are only necessary if they are required by specific circumstances of individual posts. During the daily routine duty, however, texts are normally written in the writer's native language. For conscripts, the time is too short to give them formal language training. We find the soldiers directly from the border of the two countries, and we find enough who know enough about the other nation's language.

During the first year of the Brigade, we alternated French and German eachweek. In the meantime, the following procedure has been agreed upon: during important meetings, as well as in exercises, command or operations, everybody uses his native language. Therefore, an adequate level of listening and reading comprehension is obligatory and it exists. But in peace time, in order to improve our linguistic proficiency, we try to use our partner's language all day in conversation or during joint meetings.

Texts are written in the writer's native language. So it is quite common that in a Brigade order one paragraph is written in German by a German officer, and the next paragraph written in French by a French officer. Unilingual documents are routinely translated by the Brigade language section or by members of the respective staff division. Usually this is necessary either for basic orders or for the Brigade's correspondence, for example, with national higher headquarters or neighbor brigades.

The national training plan in the Brigade provides for language courses either at national language offices or by teachers during normal service. For this purpose, each garrison of the Brigade has language teachers. The language training is a national responsibility. Due to the basic knowledge and different qualification levels, it remains embedded in the educational system of both nations.

France and Germany each have their own linguistic schools. For example, the German component of the Brigade detaches about fifty men per year to courses at a national school. Language training is also supported by military exchange projects with partnership units, or by staff participation in military courses at training facilities of the counterpart nation. Approximately half of the company commanders of the Franco-German Brigade attended company commander courses in the counterpart nation. I myself spent two years at the General Staff College in Paris. In the quarters of mixed units, German and French soldiers share rooms, which provides additional opportunities to improve linguistic capabilities.

To conclude, **the co-use of two languages of the same status has not lead to big problems**. If there were three or more working languages at the same time, the everyday routine could not be handled without an extremely high amount of translation. An exception might be with the use of English.

The bilingual system of the Brigade has resulted in significant outcomes. **The practical use of foreign languages in everyday routine is a particularly motivating aspect for temporary career soldiers or for conscripts**. When communication is with external authorities, however, we must always keep in mind that they only understand their native language or NATO English. Due to the translations required in this case, we have to take into account the additional time and assets needed for staffing.

Resisting the Anglo-Centric Approach

Stephanie van Reigersberg
Chief, Interpreting Division, Office of Language Services,
US Department of State

One of the things that struck me repeatedly today was the contrast between the European vision of the problems we have been discussing and the American experience with regard to bilingualism and attitudinal approaches to language-learning and language use. **In the US, language does not define one's identity in the same way that it does in Europe**. My grandparents spoke four different languages. I do not think anyone who knows me possibly could guess what four those languages are.

I was also struck by the absence of a reference to the "Anglo-centric approach" to language. This is obviously the worst problem that a person in my position has. The culture of this country is definitely Anglo-centric. It takes a great effort, even in the diplomatic community, for people to believe that anyone of worth does not speak English. I cannot tell you how many times I have had diplomats, people who have even had ambassadorial positions abroad, come up to me and say, "Stephanie, tell me the truth ... when you interpret for Messrs. Mitterand and Bush, you don't really have to interpret, do you?" Or, **"Is it really possible that Boris Yeltsin doesn't speak English?"**

It is very hard for people from Europe to associate or identify with this kind of mind set. But I think it is very important, if we are going to communicate across the Atlantic, for the Europeans - who are so accustomed to multilingualism and live it everyday -to realize that it is an intellectual stretch for Americans to believe that people of worth and people in important positions often do not speak English.

PART V

THE POLITICS AND PRAGMATICS OF LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

By Dr. Humphrey Tonkin
Seminar Rapporteur
President, University of Hartford
Chair, Center for Research and Documentation
on World Language Problems

It is remarkable how seldom non-specialists in language address the question of how language and the management of language differences may be important in relations among sovereign states. Language is a problem only for the people who are not participating in the dialogue, and they by definition get short shrift.

Much like plumbing, language, while generally regarded as a mark of civilized living, tends to get taken for granted. It is expected to function when needed, without ever becoming a matter for polite discussion. Like plumbing, language is the province of specialists who should be as invisible as possible and not get in the way of normal operations.

In international organizations and in less formal international networks, such as the international business community, keeping quiet about language suits many people just fine. If the issue is kept off the agenda, the status quo will prevail, and most members of the bureaucracies of power-structures in question have attained their positions by adaptation to the status quo, in which they accordingly have a vested interest. If, by chance, language does become an agenda item, the debate will be conducted in terms of communication and its virtues.

But in reality a quite different political drama, in which issues of national pride, status, and power are every bit as important as ease of communication, will be played out beneath the surface. Language is, after all, both a means of communication and a badge, and **the particular choice of one language over another in a given context is decided not on the basis of economy of effort, but on the outcome of a struggle for control - in this case, control of the discourses**.

Language policy with and between states, as in international organizations, indicates that the assertion of one's linguistic identity in the face of a dominant national or international language may not have to do with the facilitation of communication as much as with the sharing and devolution of power. This holds true both in the European context, for example in Catalonia, where language is one element in a much larger assertion of regional and national identity, and in the North American context, where French plays this role in Canada, and where Spanish is the language of a geographically scattered underclass in the United States.

Most debates about language accordingly take on a highly personal coloration: language is tied to identity, and to inclusion and exclusion. Dominant languages do not make deals with lesser languages; they shout them down. Lesser languages do not assert themselves because of the beauty of their syntax, but because they carry other political freight, which is often deeply threatening to existing structures of power.

The linguistic scene in Western Europe at present, and to some extent in the United States, shows a devolution of certain kinds of power (and hence enfranchisement of minorities and subgroups) derived from an attempt to achieve democratic consent for the centralization of certain other kinds of power. One outcome of this has been the recognition and empowerment of numerous local cultures and languages to a degree unheard of in the days of unchallenged national sovereignty. **A lack of awareness of the linguistic dimension of power and empowerment has hampered our ability to find solutions to multilingualism and to deal with the competing claims of inclusion and effective communication.**

We have not done very well in organizing ourselves for international communication across languages.

Clearly, we have not done very well in organizing ourselves for international communication across languages. In part, because of their lack of sophistication in linguistic matters, the leaders of these organizations have been quick to propose policies and procedures for language services that border on the unrealistic, or they have been slow to remedy obvious failings and shortcomings. The United Nations, for example, is still using for its deliberations a language formula worked out in 1945 to provide linguistic representation for the victors of World War II. French, English, Russian, and Chinese are among the six official languages of the General Assembly because their owners won the war; German and Japanese are missing from the formula because these powers lost. In three years' time, we shall celebrate fifty years of the United Nations. In the meantime, the world has changed profoundly, in both technological and political terms. But the "solution" to language differences in the UN remains the same, and it is less and less adequate as time passes.

The old League of Nations had only two languages - English and French - because these languages were judged, correctly, to have more than national and regional currency. The more complex solution established at the UN was a direct consequence of the development of the technique of simultaneous interpretation at the Nuremberg Trials, a technique made possible by advances in technology. Since then, we have passed through several technological revolutions, and some profound political changes, but the UN has been painfully slow to mecha-

nize and has not explored the reformulation of the linguistic regime to any serious degree.

In the European Community, a decision was made from the beginning to include the languages of all of the members, thereby creating a form of equality and making it easy for all members to communicate effectively with their own governments, people, and legal systems. From the beginning, this solution put severe strains on the technology, and it has since become increasingly tenuous and unevenly applied. As the Community gets bigger, the problem compounds itself with great rapidity. Already the language services of the European Community are the largest in the world.

The United States presents a different picture. As a single nation state, it has little need to deal with multilingualism in the relations between its federal units. However, its constitutional obligation to make its services and institutions available and open to all of its citizens raises numerous questions relating to voting and to social services, and its tradition of relatively open immigration puts a huge linguistic burden on its educational system. Accordingly, **for the US government, the great issue is how to adapt its institutions to deal with a multilingual population, while at the same time trying to encourage this population to assimilate, among other things, by learning and using the English language**. To what extent is it legitimate for the state to coerce its citizens into conformity? To what extent is the state the servant of each of its individual citizens and obliged to adapt itself to fit their needs? These competing questions are not fully resolved.

Multilingualism is both a liability and anasset, a bringer of division and a bringer of productive diversity.

The fact is that language, in all its aspects, is increasingly emerging as an important agenda item on both sides of the Atlantic. Multilingualism is both a liability and an asset, a bringer of division and a bringer of productive diversity. How can we maximize the latter while minimizing the former?

From the discussions of The European Institute seminar on multilingualism, a number of solutions present themselves to the problem of communication across language barriers in formal institutional settings.

Translation and Interpretation

Generally, translation and interpretation services are provided in a given situation because "A" does not speak the language of "B" and "B" does not speak the language of "A". However, in some cases, such services may be provided because "B" does not wish to use the language of "A", or does not wish to appear inferior to "A", or wishes to heighten his/her own prestige. In other words, interpreters and translators are sometimes used essentially as pawns in a power play. This is not to depreciate the importance of such a power play; often major political issues are at stake in the relationship between the parties, and it may be quite legitimate to gain and exploit every advantage available. The obvious way to solve the problem is to oblige "A" and "B" to communicate in the language of "C", but such a solution seems so absurd that it is judged more appropriate to hire a team of translators and interpreters to play an elaborate reality-denying game.

Interpreters and translators are sometimes used essentially as pawns in a power play.

Translation and interpretation create a two-tier society, a society in which unmediated communication is problematic and a class of mediators controls the information exchange. Such a system, as the large international organizations amply demonstrate, is not easily changed or adapted and can lead to rigidity. It is particularly ill-adapted to the fine give-and-take of debate and to the dynamics of informal negotiation.

Because translation and interpretation are essentially binary in nature, (that is to say, they are based on switching from "A" to "B" or "B" to "A", and the use of multiple languages simply results in the multiplication of pairs), they have very limited capacity in highly multilingual situations. What may work in an organization with four languages may not work in an organization with eight.

A Limited-Language Solution

When the Congress of Berlin met in 1878 to redraw large parts of the map of Europe, the participants spoke French because French was widely regarded as the language of diplomacy. The French enjoyed a linguistic advantage in speaking their native language. When the Allies met in Versailles in 1919, they used

The EC made all languages co-equal and has reached, some would say, exceeded, the limit of its linguistic expansion.

two languages - English and French. They did so largely because the British and Americans wished to be allowed to speak their own language. This was the beginning of the notion that one should be entitled, or should strive to be entitled, to use one's own language in international negotiation, and it led, stage by stage, to the phenomenon of linguistic haves and have-nots at the UN. The European Community, beginning with this premise, made all languages co-equal. It has now reached, some would say, exceeded, the limit of its linguistic expansion and must seek some other solution.

One possibility is to have the European Community use a limited-language solution similar to that employed at the UN. Three languages have obvious claims: English because of its international status and its strength as a second language in Europe; French for historical reasons and because of its common roots with Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian; and German because of its currency in central Europe and its common roots with Dutch and Danish. *De facto*, this process is already occurring in the formal and informal deliberations of the Community. Arguably, **it is better to put policies and practices in place now to accommodate to this change than simply to let the process take its course**, outside the official policies of the organization.

A Single-Language Solution

The obvious candidate for such status, both in Europe and at the UN, is English. Indeed, English is already well on its way to establishing itself in this role. The vast majority of the documents produced at the UN have English as their original language, and most countries take great pains to send good English speakers to New York to do their diplomatic business. While French has co-equal status in the Secretariat, it is English that dominates. English has made significant inroads in Geneva; it rules in Vienna. Even in Paris, at UNESCO, English tends to dominate.

The exclusive use of English would, of course, give a major advantage to English speakers in employment and in debate in international organizations, and this is judged unacceptable by many. But **without realistic language policies in place, the temptation to cut corners, or the simple need to get the job**

done, will push organizations toward such solutions, regardless of inequalities and disadvantages.

Language Learning

Obviously, the relative need for language services goes down as language knowledge of certain key languages goes up. International organizations operate extensive language-learning programs and have had notable success in improving the language skills of their staffs. But **language learning must begin in the education systems of the various countries, and language must be accorded a sufficiently central role in curriculum.** If this is to happen, a virtual intellectual revolution will be required, at least in the United States. Not only is language little taught in American schools, but language teaching, when it does occur, treats language less as a living and active affair than a literary artifact. **Language belongs neither to the humanities, nor to the sciences, neither to one branch of learning nor to another: it is a mode of behavior, a social institution, a means of expression.** It is incumbent on our educational systems to see it as such and to help students put it to immediate and practical use.

Missing in the United States is a coherent language policy for education.

Missing in the United States is a coherent language policy for education. Much could be said for requiring students to begin their language learning with French or Spanish, as early as possible, and branch out from these languages to others, perhaps further removed from their own. As it is, language teaching, especially in elementary schools, is incoherent, sporadic, and not easily transferable from school to school. Here the Europeans do notably better than the Americans, and a coherent language-learning policy for the European Community is emerging through such programs as Lingua.

The fundamental problem is that we neither understand the true nature of language nor comprehend the relationship between language and power.

The fundamental problem is that we neither understand the true nature of language nor comprehend the relationship between language and power. Failing to understand it, we allow ourselves to be sucked into so-called solutions to language diversity that merely rearrange the balance of power without addressing the fundamental needs of communication.

What can we learn from one another across the ocean that separates us?

Language Learning

We need improved learning on both sides of the Atlantic, but particularly in the US. Although such operations as the Alliance Française and the Goethe Institute are very helpful, we need a coordinated effort by the EC to help the US learn the languages of the Community, which would be very much in the interest of the multilingual community. The alternative is English monolingualism, which would make us all poorer spiritually and would disadvantage the Europeans.

Language Teaching

For their part, the Americans must continue to work at reconceptualizing language learning and language teaching. A person wishing to teach language at the university level can do so only by acquiring a Ph.D in an individual language or group of languages. For the commonly taught languages, the only Ph.D.s that exist are humanities-based. **The skilled language teacher who is interested in an instrumental, as opposed to a literary, approach to language stands no chance of ever ending up in the college classroom**, particularly since he or she will be judged by peers not so much for skill in teaching language as for publications and teaching in literature.

Only certain professionally-based language programs, such as the Defense Language Institute, have broken out of this humanities-based model.

Only certain professionally-based language programs, such as those offered by the Defense Language Institute and the Foreign Service Institute, have broken out of this humanities-based model by offering language training that is based on highly practical skills and on oral proficiency as well as proficiency in reading and writing.

This stranglehold on language teaching exercised by humanities professors translates into a particular brand of teacher training, so that the **teachers of languages who go out into the high schools are also strongly biased toward literature and the written word**. Many of them, lacking systematic exposure

to the language they are to teach, are ill-prepared to provide their students with the experiences needed to become fully proficient. Hence, the success rate in language courses is very low and dropouts are numerous.

The Europeans, with their interest in language for special purposes and language in the workplace, have made much greater strides than the US in the development of practically-oriented language-teaching programs. They can perhaps succeed in influencing us where our own ESL specialists - the most advanced in the practical teaching of language - have largely failed.

Language Technology

One of the most important ways of improving language teaching in the US and perhaps Europe as well, is through the development of more effective technological aids. Here a transatlantic effort at cooperation could be immensely helpful. Needed particularly is a better alliance between specialists in communications and specialists in language to design systems for the processing of language in a multilingual setting -systems both for language learning and for translation and related activities. One of the best hopes for language learning in the US is distance learning, in which, the local teacher plays the role of mentor rather than that of sole authority.

Computer translation has run into numerous snags arising primarily from syntactical complexity, but overcoming these difficulties is in part a matter of willingness to undertake the arduous work of research and development with the expectation of gains several years down the line. **Transatlantic agreement to pool resources in such an effort could hasten the day when texts could be translated with minimal human intervention.**

Language Maintenance

The US is a nation of language loss: people lose their old roots, including their linguistic roots, and their skills are not passed on to later generations. Likewise, in both the US and Europe, people learn languages in school and then gradually forget them as a result of disuse. We should be less negligent of the linguistic capital that is all around us, and we should embark on a national effort to preserve and revive language skills. Europe could be very helpful to the US in bringing this about.

Monolingualism is both an asset and a liability, and multilingualism is both an asset and a liability.

Let us remind ourselves again that monolingualism is both an asset and a liability, and multilingualism is both an asset and a liability. **We must find ways of maximizing economic development while preserving and strengthening the linguistic heritage that enriches Europe and could, if we would allow it, enrich the US**. For inexplicable reasons, language differences engender fear and suspicion, and challenges to the linguistic status quo can produce reactions that border on hysteria. Until we understand and accept language for what it is, we shall not overcome this irrationality, and policies that preserve diversity while producing optimal communication will not come about.

PART VI

SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS

Partial Roster

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